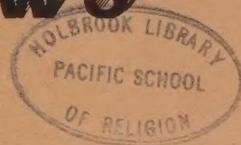


CHURCH UNION

NEWS AND VIEWS

AUGUST 1956



The Economic Assets of the Church

CHURCH UNION NEWS AND VIEWS

(New Series)

Vol. 1 }

**Organ of the Negotiating Committee for Church Union in
North India and Pakistan**

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Church Union

News and Views

(New Series)

The Things that Abide

THIS is the Declaration of Faith on which the Negotiating Churches are agreed :

The uniting Churches hold the faith which the Church has ever held in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the World, in whom men are saved by grace through faith and in accordance with the revelation of God which He made, being Himself God Incarnate, they worship one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Plan of Union I. IV. (i))

Some people have found fault with the Plan of Union because it does not contain a more detailed confession of Faith than this. They forget that the Church in the New Testament had a very simple confession indeed, just the words "Jesus is Lord", but it was enough. It was enough, for these words cannot be sincerely spoken unless a man's eyes have been opened to know Christ by the living God Himself, as when St. Thomas fell at Jesus' feet, saying "My Lord and my God." But where these words are sincerely spoken, the Foundation of the Church is so laid that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Christ is the one Foundation.

It is on this confession that the negotiating Churches are agreed, and they also acknowledge that they have received it only through

the revelation of the living God who still speaks through the Scriptures :

They accept the Holy Scriptures of Old Testament and the New Testament as the inspired Word of God, as containing all things necessary to salvation, and as the ultimate standard of faith.

(Plan of Union I. IV. (ii))

During its history, the Church has from time to time been led to put its Confession of Faith into more elaborate words than the original simple statement. In so doing, however, it has never been adding to that confession. It has been trying merely to make plain what that Confession signifies in relation to one problem or another, and also to make it quite clear what it rules out as false. Some of the historical Confessions are of great value and in particular the Negotiating Churches :

Accept the Creeds commonly called the Apostles' and Nicene as witnessing to and guarding that faith, which is continuously confirmed in the spiritual experience of the Church of Christ.

(Plan of Union I. IV. (iii))

There are other confessions also which different churches have valued and which the United Church will accept as consistent with

NOTICE

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its own confession, and there may be occasions in the future when the United Church will be called upon to state its Faith afresh because of some new challenge. Yet, in every case, the words used are themselves "earthen vessels," imperfect human expressions which have soon to be translated and explained in fresh words to convey their meaning to a new generation. They are not absolute things to be worshipped. The only Absolute is the Lord Himself, the one foundation is the work of God in Christ.

It is He who has finished the work by which we are drawn together into one, for it is He who died that He "might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross." This is the Absolute event without which there would be no Church. Unless our Lord had already gathered us to Himself thus forming us into His Church, all our attempts are sheer futility. But if He has indeed done this mighty thing, then by what conceivable argument can we justify our remaining in separation from those who have been made one in Christ? Our unity is not given in precisely formulated doctrine, it is created in the work of Christ.

* * * * *

Others again would like to see written into the Plan some legally binding guarantees that certain forms of administration will be kept in perpetuity. This is to assume that there already exist certain forms so perfect that we cannot imagine the Church without them. But this is to conceive the Church as a kind of legal corporation, already complete and perfect, so that its constitution may be recorded and preserved inviolable.

This is to forget that the Church is still the Church on pilgrimage. It has come into being in response to its Lord's great act and call, but it still goes forward in response to His "upward calling". "That which is perfect" is still to come, and meantime "We see through a glass darkly". To attempt in this world to fix any form as absolutely inflexible and unchangeable is to forget that it is only in the heavenly places that perfection is

promised. In Judaism there were forms which were believed to be unchangeable, including the temple worship, but in his vision of the New Jerusalem, St. John "saw no temple therein". So too in his great hymn of love, St. Paul took the familiar features of the church of his day, prophecy and tongue and knowledge, and declared of each of these that after all it was provisional and must "pass away". Of course there are forms of the life of the Church which through twenty centuries have been blessed of God, and none who believes that God's hand is on His Church imagines that anything precious in her heritage will be cast away, or that He will contradict Himself. Yet in this world nothing is yet made perfect and to live in the Church is to live in faith, in the assurance that He will lead His people into that understanding of what is needed for future conditions which we cannot now foresee but which, for this very reason, we need not fear. Once more it is not what we have today which is Absolute, but the Absolute lies before us "when that which is perfect is come". The continuity of the Church does not lie in a cast iron constitution, it consists in that life which is hid with Christ in God. He is the End who is also the Beginning.

* * * * *

There is something which remains: "Now abideth, faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love". The New Testament offers us no guidance in legislating for a Church without love. It is love which is the "bond of perfectness"; it is "love of the brethren" which provides the evidence that we have passed from death into life. This is so fundamental that it is merely fantastic to think that there might be some legally binding means of holding together a Church divided by mutual distrust.

* * * * *

The Union to which the churches in North India and Pakistan are striving is a Union with in the Church, a receiving of one another by those who are brethren. It is an adventure of trust because it is a response to God's love.

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The Unification of the Ministry

The Setting of the Proposals

IN August 1955, the Negotiating Committee appointed a sub-committee to try to prepare a comprehensive statement about the proposed Unification of the Ministry so as to bring out more clearly what is understood and intended by it. The same committee was to wrestle with possible further changes in the words to be used in the "Unification" service itself to make it more acceptable to different points of view. An article in the February issue of this journal was an attempt to explain why this work was thought to be necessary.

The committee met in Bombay early in May, and set itself first to deal with the proposed service. It had before it some suggestions made by the Church Union Committee of the United Church of Northern India and some other proposals. As a result of the discussions, it was agreed to recommend to the Negotiating Committee that certain sections be amended to read as follows:

1. The ministers present shall say:

"In the conviction that God wills one Communion and fellowship of all who believe in His Son Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, I, believing myself to have been duly and lawfully ordained within the..... Church to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the Church of God, am humbly prepared to commit myself to God and, through the laying on of hands with prayer, to receive from Him such grace, commission and authority as it may be His will to bestow upon me for my ministry in the Church of God within the Church of North India and Pakistan."

2. When hands are laid on these ministers, the following words shall be used:

"Forasmuch as thou wast called and ordained within the..... Church to the ministry of the Church of God and art now called to the ministry of the Church of God within the Church of North India and Pakistan, mayest thou receive from God the power and grace of the Holy Spirit to continue in thee His gifts, and in accordance with His

will to bestow on thee grace, commission and authority for the ministry of the Church of God within the Church of North India and Pakistan and take thou authority to preach the Word of God, to fulfil the ministry of reconciliation and to minister Christ's sacraments in the Church of North India and Pakistan; and see that thou do all these things in brotherly partnership with God's fellow-workers whom in this union of Churches He has made thine.

It will be noted that, both in the statement made by the ministers themselves and in the words used by those who lay hands on them, there is a clear acknowledgement that they had been "ordained to the ministry of the Church of God". It will also be noted that the prayer to God, which is the heart of the event, is now purely forward looking, seeking from Him that "grace, commission and authority" which is a daily necessity for each of His ministers. Finally, while the sphere of this ministry is "within the Church of North India and Pakistan", which is the extent of the jurisdiction of the particular Church organisation concerned, yet the prayer has reference to a "ministry of the Church of God", which is no more limited than was the original ordination of the persons involved.

There are some for whom this service, with its direct reference to the ministry, appears to be a necessity. There are others who will accept it as part of that total and continuing prayer for God's blessing on the whole Church, including its ministers, without which no Church can live. The members of the Committee hope that the proposed changes will be found helpful to both.

The Committee next turned to the task of preparing a possible explanatory statement. As raw material it had before it several pages of such statements collected by Dr. Kellock. The amount and the complexity of the material were daunting, and the committee was forced back to the question of whether it could really hope to prepare a useful statement and of whether the *Plan* does not really

contain all that is needed. It was recalled that at an earlier meeting of the Negotiating Committee (Calcutta, March 1951) it had actually been proposed to draw up a statement in parallel columns showing the different view-points of those who regard the "Unification" act as necessary and those who do not, but who are ready to share in it as a means of transcending these differences. At that time, however, it was doubted whether two statements would meet the need, and it was also believed that the different viewpoints were well known, so that it would be sufficient to insert in the Plan the qualifying phrase: "While recognizing that there may be different interpretations of this rite, deriving from different Church traditions....." These words rule out the accusation of a deliberate hiding of the differences which are to be transcended, but sometimes their force is overlooked. It should also be noted that in the Plan itself special reference is made to differences due to episcopacy and non-episcopacy.

In the Bombay discussions, the great importance which the Anglican Church attaches to the provision for episcopacy in the United Church was again underlined. This has been accepted by all as an essential element in the future constitution of the Church. The question is, however, what happens if the conscience of even one person in the United Church prevents him from recognising as a minister one who had not been episcopally ordained? Will not the need to respect that conscience, (as it is found for example in the South India "Pledge") introduce a sense of division within the ministry of the United Church, all would desire to avoid? That this need not be an insuperable barrier is suggested by the quotation from the Bishop of Exeter's views which we print on another page, for the fact that a minister is fully authorised within an episcopally ordered church puts him in a different position from one who ministers without such authorisation. Nevertheless, the Anglican Church has been deeply exercised on this matter, and has pled for such an act of authorisation at the outset of union as will eliminate all difficulty for the tender conscience.

Against this, of course, other delegations do not share this emphasis on the necessity of the episcopate. Willing to accept it as part of the Plan for the future, they certainly do not believe that its absence has been a supreme

obstacle to the receiving of God's gifts of grace in the past. The Anglican conviction that episcopacy should be in the United Church is fully appreciated, just as others welcome the provision for the place of the local church or the place given to conciliar government. What they find less easy to accept is the elevation of episcopacy to such a level of the absolute that without it even a meeting at the Lord's Table seems to be ruled out. Also many have been troubled by the implication that by a skilfully devised form of service we should be able to provide the essential conditions within which alone God can give His gifts of unity. This does not look like an essentially humble proposition, but rather to contain a remarkable confidence in our own judgement as to what is required, which overlooks the truth that we all without exception fall far short of the will of God and are, all of us, dependent on His unmerited grace, not least when we approach Union. To this point of view any particular act of unification as a *sine qua non* of Union constitutes an insuperable obstacle.

The Bombay meeting provided an answer by an emphatic underlining of the truth that this act of unification is actually not made the fundamental condition of union, for in fact the union of the Churches takes place first, prior to any such act of unification, and the basis of union is not a man-made act at all but is the acceptance of the gift of unity which God in Christ has given us. The Union comes first. That no other action is an essential preliminary to it even in Anglican eyes is illustrated by the recognition which that Church has given to another Union (that of South India) in which no service of unification with laying on of hands took place at all. It is plain, therefore that Church Union takes place without this act, and the unification is something which is done by the already United Church in order to prevent the scruples of conscience on the part of certain of its members from hindering the fulness of communion and fellowship which are essential for growth into Unity. At the meeting in Bombay the actual wording in which this might be expressed was left for further study, but at a later meeting held in Serampore in June the following was agreed to and will go to the Negotiating Committee for its judgement:

While the act of primary importance in the Inauguration of Union is that in which

the uniting churches declare their assent to the Plan of Union and thereby accept from God that gift of Union for the Church which He alone can bestow, it is agreed that there shall be not only a common membership of the Church but also a common and united ministry of the Word and Sacraments in order that the reconciling grace of the Holy Spirit may not be hindered.

No one method of the unification of the ministry is essential to a United Church. One method may provide a unification over

a period of time; another may be such as to provide a unified ministry without delay.

For the removal of barriers to complete reconciliation within the united Church and for the avoidance of hindrances to intercommunion between it and other Churches the method here adopted provides a unification of the ministry throughout the United Church in as short a time after the Inauguration as is possible.

W. S.

An Anglican View of the Church of South India

AT the Bristol diocesan conference on October 29th 1956, at the request of the diocesan bishop, Dr. Cockin, Dr. Mortimer, Bishop of Exeter, reviewed the questions relating to Christian Unity which the Convocations have recently been discussing. More than half his address was concerned with the relations of the Church of England with the churches of South India, and particularly with the points which had caused concern in certain circles. The bishop emphasized that the Church of South India is now a reality and we are therefore obliged to define our relations with it, even if those relations must be purely negative, like the mutual relations of the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans. As there can be no question of *apartheid*—no one wants that—it is incumbent on us to define the degree of fellowship that is to be established. This problem was delegated to a committee of the Convocations (of which the bishop is a member) and the conclusions of the committee were unanimously accepted by the Convocations, although in certain quarters this acceptance was held to be contrary to 'catholic order'.

Dealing with the validity of orders in the new Church, the bishop explained that the Constitution and the formulae of the Ordinal both prove with absolute clarity that, in regard to substance, form and intention, the orders of the C. S. I. are in all points as valid as those of the Church of England. He described the rapid development of a catholic attitude which was penetrating theology and liturgy, and he quoted the article of Father L. Bouyer which appeared in the July-August 1955 issue of the Dominican publication

Istina, in which the author, in comparing the two churches, the Church of England and the C. S. I., claims superiority for the latter in the realms of theology and liturgy.

The two following facts present more difficulties: (1) The C. S. I. is in communion with the Church of England, and (2) There exist within the C. S. I. a decreasing number of presbyters who have not received episcopal ordination. If these anomalies force us to restrict the measure of fellowship between the two Churches, nevertheless they are in no wise such as to make us refuse all association. Church history is full of examples of Churches which are in communion with others without being in communion with certain Churches which are in communion with the latter. (A is in communion with B, which is in communion with C, which is not in communion with A). The fact is regrettable and may cause some difficulties, but it is certain that, having excellent precedents to justify it, this restricted communion does not at all endanger or catholicism.

The bishop admitted that the presbyters who were not episcopally ordained were in an irregular position, but he insisted on the fact also that they had the canonical permission of the bishop and were in complete communion with him, which could not but affect their position and the character of their ministry. He quoted the former Bishop of Oxford, Dr. K. Kirk, in support of the thesis that apostolic succession was a matter of spiritual relationship and of a valid commission, rather than of technically valid ordinations treated as a mechanical process.

—Translated from *Bulletin Oecumenique Anglican* by J. M.

The Thirty Year Period in the C. S. I.

An Explanation by Bishop H. Sumitra, Moderator of Synod

THE thirty year period (C.S.I. Const. II 21) has been very much misunderstood. It does not mean that we in the C.S.I. are looking forward to the end of this period when what is irregular now will be regularized or put an end to. What seems irregular to those outside does not seem so to us; from our point of view we are one Church with one ministry, and the end of the thirty year period will not in any way alter that fact! The thirty year period refers to the reception of ministers who are ordained in parent Churches in Europe and America. They are received as ministers of the C.S.I. without re-ordination if they give their assent to the Governing Principles of the Church and accept the Constitution of the Church. For thirty years from the inauguration of the C. S. I. this provision will be in force. At the end of the period this matter will be reviewed. It is left to the Church of that day to decide about what exceptions, if any, are to be allowed to the rule that our ministry is an episcopally ordained ministry. This provision has been made not so much for the sake of those in the C.S.I. but for those who are in the parent Churches. We were also not willing to bind our Church for all time to the arrangement we have made. We have no doubt that the Holy Spirit who has taught us to make this arrangement will teach those who will come after us to make the right decision for their time. We also hope that by the end of the thirty year period the parent Churches will have united and that we shall be in full communion with them all, thus making it unnecessary to make any special provision for the ministers who will come from other Churches to serve in the C.S.I. A portion of our reply to Question VI of Lambeth Conference, 1941, may be quoted here. "There are, moreover very sound reasons for this provision. In the first place, these decisions ought to be taken by people who have grown up in the united

Church and not in the separated Churches. In the second place, we hope that they will be taken by a Church much more Indian in character than the C.S.I. now is. In the third place, we hope and pray for changes in the relations between the Churches in the West, and between the C.S.I. and other Churches in South India, which will profoundly modify the character of the questions to be answered at the end of the thirty year period."

It might be added that other methods such as "Mutual Commissioning" and "Supplementary Ordination" were considered by the Joint Committee, but were rejected. Perhaps there are a few ministers who are prepared to receive "Supplementary Ordination" for the sake of union.

Since unfortunately the "Thirty year Period" in the Church of South India is often misunderstood in the way indicated by Bishop Sumitra, it is good to have this clear statement of what it actually implies, as given by the Bishop during a visit to Africa.

At the same time it is to be noted that in the North India and Pakistan Plan a different procedure is proposed for rather a different reason. It has been observed that the necessary South India provision to respect the conscience of those who are not able to accept certain ministers because they were not episcopally ordained, has led to obstacles to full communion and fellowship in certain quarters and has also hindered full inter-communion with another Church. For this reason, as explained in the article on "The Unification of the Ministry" in this issue, the negotiators in North India have sought to provide for a means of overcoming this obstacle. The adoption of this Plan implies no criticism of the method followed in South India.



Letter to the Editor

Differences about Baptists

Dear Mr. Editor,

Mr. Price's article in the May number of *Church Union (News and Views)* states as a Baptist a point of view which many non-Baptists may feel re-assuring. It may encourage them to think that the plea for at least the possibility of the baptism on profession of faith for one who had been baptized in infancy,—a plea which I had made in the February number—is a plea that may be disregarded, since not all Baptists are so insistent on this awkward point of view. It may encourage them to feel that Church Union negotiations need not take this issue seriously, since there are "liberal" Baptists like Mr. Price, with whom negotiations for Union may progress without it.

That a number of Baptists share Mr. Price's view is true. But it ought to be made clear that at the United Conference of the Churches associated with the Baptist Missionary Society in India and Pakistan held last December, the following resolutions *inter alia* were passed :

"(5) Because of our respect for freedom of conscience we recognize the right of those so minded to have their children baptized and, when such children later make their profession of faith, we recognize them as fellow-believers and do not demand that they receive believer's baptism.

"(6) But equally because of our respect for freedom of conscience we require that provision be made, with due safeguards to prevent abuse, for those desiring baptism on profession of faith (even though they had been baptized as infants).

"(7) The proposal that, for those who desire believer's baptism (even though they had been baptized in infancy), provision be made for a service of immersion on profession of faith as a re-affirmation of their baptism in infancy, is not likely to commend itself generally and is likely to lead to misunderstanding.

"(8) In any case we cannot agree to the requirement that such believer's baptism or such "re-affirmation of baptism" be administered in private."

It is also noteworthy that the wording of (5) originally had the word "expect", but this was changed to the stronger word "demand", since some of those present

would not concede that we did "not expect that they receive believer's baptism".

This was the most representative conference possible of Baptist Churches associated with the Baptist Missionary Society and these resolutions were carried after a debate on Church Union more thorough than any yet in Baptist circles in India. This resolution shows that the position, with which Mr. Price disagrees, has to be taken seriously.

It may be contended that the rank and file of Baptist churches are not interested in this matter of Baptism: any denominational division being regarded as a Western importation. But if this be said, it may certainly be replied that the rank and file of non-Baptist churches are not interested in the prohibition of believer's baptism for one baptized in infancy (nor, for that matter, in many of the other things that perplex us in our negotiations). The stress on baptism and its indispensability for church membership is a part of the Plan for which Baptists were not primarily responsible. But since such stress is laid on Baptism in the Plan, Baptists cannot be blamed if they give careful attention to this issue, and do not regard it as a matter of indifference whether a believer, who is under the compulsion of the Word of God, is prohibited from obeying that Word. It would be strange if such a Plan with such a stress were to exclude those who do care deeply about Baptism.

It may be that at this point there are two completely irreconcilable points of view and that the negotiations will founder here. It may be that the only solution is for Baptists to give in to the majority. On such terms quite a number of those who are called Baptists will be happy to enter the United Church, but let it not be imagined that the United Church will then have conserved the values and traditions of the Baptist churches. For the casualty will be freedom of conscience.

There are several things in Mr. Price's article that cry out for answer, but it does not seem fitting, Mr. Editor, that the pages

of Church Union should become the arena for controversy between Baptists. If Mr. Price will try to convince his fellow-Baptists, through an organ more appropriate for this purpose I shall give an answer. One thing, however, seems to me (at least), so serious a misrepresentation of Baptist principle that I hope an answer may be allowed here. Mr. Price seems to equate "freedom of conscience" with "maintaining one's rights". There is all the universe of difference between the democratic principle of human rights or of claiming freedom to do what you want, and the Baptist principle of doing what you are convinced God has commanded you to do. Baptists are not concerned (at least in principle, though alas, their practice is not always up to standard!) with maintaining one's rights, but in standing for the "Crown Rights of the Redeemer". Anabaptists and Baptists have not suffered death, imprisonment and forfeiture of goods just because they claimed the right to be baptized if they wanted to. They suffered because "We must obey God rather than man". If the authorities of the new Church still say, "The rule of the Church is this—you must not listen to what you call the Voice of God", then there will be no difference between the bishops of the 16th and 17th

centuries and those of today. If someone says, "We must obey the Bishop rather than God", let him say it! But in such a situation Baptists who are worth their salt will know where they stand.

But if, in the spirit of "A Presbyterian" whose letter, Mr. Editor, you printed in the last number, the authority of the new Church says, "Of course you must obey the Voice of God,—but let us first make quite sure what the Voice of God is", then, whatever the practical decision in any particular case, Baptists will know that they are not disloyal to the truth into which they may hope the Holy Spirit to guide them.

Mr. Price also begs the question in another way when he speaks of "the conscience of the Church". What he is referring to is the "conscience of the paedo-Baptist section of the Church", or rather, the "conscience of those who hold paedo-Baptist views with strictness". This may be the conscience of the majority of the Church; it cannot be called the "conscience of the Church".

But I have already written too much.

Yours sincerely,
Serampore College
28 July, 1956.
E. L. WENGER

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

The purpose of the work will make it plain that it is not polemical in character or deliberately proselytizing in intention. Naturally, the Baptist counter-arguments will have to be taken into account and the grounds of their rejection stated. Naturally, too, it is hoped that those who do not accept infant baptism will read the statement and consider it carefully in the light of Holy Scripture and Scriptural doctrine. Much of the acrimony which has entered into the whole question is due to the unwillingness to subject preconceptions to a solid Scriptural investigation, with a consequent intolerance on the one hand and exclusivism on the other. This is obviously wrong. What is needed is that both baptists and non-baptists should be prepared at least for a mutual toleration and respect, and that they should give themselves not merely to find support in Scripture for their own inherited teaching but to subject that teaching to the searching and if necessary reforming criticism of Scripture.

From the Preface to a booklet on
"The Baptism of Infants" by the Rev. G. W. Bromiley, M.A., D.Litt.



Scheme of Church Union in Ceylon (2)*

REV. J. W. L. TIMMINS

THE type of reunion set out in the Ceylon Scheme is that known as organic Union of which the prototype is found in South India. It is the fusing together into one integrated body of the various bodies coming together to form a United Church. This is not the only possible way of union but it has been believed that it offers greater promise than any other. The basis of it is that each church accepts the other churches with which it is to come into union as true parts of the Catholic Church, as having a real ministry of the Word and Sacraments and as possessing the power to enter into such a union with this in view that the Service of Union comes first and is the actual act of union between the Churches (p 75)*

It is quite essential to grasp this basis of union, otherwise criticism is directed at the wrong things, and our understanding of the way in which things are ordered will go astray. It is freely admitted that the Churches in separation have differed in their traditional understanding of points of theology and worship, still more in their ways of Church Government and ecclesiastical law. Each has developed its own way of life and ethos as it thought was most agreeable to the Word of God. The Scheme in which an agreed order of life, worship and government is set down does not conform to what any one of the uniting Churches have hitherto been accustomed to. This does not imply a criticism of the past history of any church (p 10)* but is an attempt to bring together whatever particular patterns of life each Church has found to be blessed of God and fused together with other elements of life in other churches to create a richer character of life for all in unity. If Church A thinks that Church B has in the past been defective in its doctrine on any particular point it is not for Church B to reform itself in advance so that it can come into union with Church A; the way is for Churches A and B to accept the new way which provides for a fuller understanding of the doctrine and unity to live the richer life, sharing the treasures of Christian truth and experience

which have been separately apprehended. The United Church will therefore be a comprehensive Church, in the sense that fundamentals of faith and order are agreed in advance and form a condition for membership in it; but there will be a considerable period of growing together into a common interpretation of the Faith.

This will be clearest in provisions made for worship in the United Church. It is laid down (p 11ff) that forms of worship previously used as authoritative shall be allowed to the congregations of the United Church and no change in forms of service will be made without the agreement of the minister and the congregation. But any congregation will be free to choose which form of worship it requires for any particular service. By this is presumably meant that once a choice is made the congregation will adhere to their choice for regular worship and not choose different forms for each Sunday. The only qualification is that the Church may lay down the essentials of what constitutes a valid and regular service of Baptism, Holy Communion and Marriage (p11). It is hoped that as in South India, once a real measure of fellowship has been established and common doctrinal and liturgical thinking has taken place it will be possible for the Church to formulate its own forms of service, which may gradually supersede the older denominational ones and so form the essential liturgical unity which is one of the main pillars of strength of any Church. This is foreshadowed in the section on the Supper of the Lord (p 14) and in the provision for the establishment of a liturgical committee (p 35). It is also recognised that the guidance and supervision of worship is rightly one of the particular functions of the Bishop (p 35) for, as head of the Church in each diocese, he will be able to assist in a unique way the growing together of all its members by ways of common worship.

Unification of the Ministry

The ordained Ministry of the Church will be, at first, the existing ministers of the uniting churches. The threefold ministry of Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons, in historic succession to the threefold ministry of the

* Page references are to the third edition of the Scheme, 1956

undivided Church, will be the ministry of the United Church. This integration of the separate ministries has in the Ceylon Scheme, as elsewhere, been one of the most difficult questions on which to reach agreement. Starting from the original basis that each Ministry is accepted and recognised by every other Church as an integral part of each Church, we accord each other the recognition that each ministry is, as it stands, a full and valid ministry of the Word and Sacraments. But its authorization to be such has, up to the time of Union, been given it only by each one particular Church, and it existed to minister the Word and Sacraments in accordance with the particular interpretation of doctrine and discipline as that Church had received them out of the Scriptures, and, to a varying extent, out of Catholic tradition. The object of the unification of the ministries (pp 20—27) is to give to each Minister according to his order the authorization of the uniting Churches which he had not previously received and the inheritance of grace, gifts, character and authority (p 21) of every church of which he had previously not been a member, let alone a minister.

The way in which this is to be accomplished is for those who are to be the bishops of the United Church first to be consecrated bishops (if not already Bishops) and then to be invested by the laying on of hands and prayer by representative ministers of every uniting church, with the fulness of every separate ministry. They thus have given to them freely, under God, the power and right of transmission to others that fulness of ministry which they then possess. Thereafter each diocesan bishop will lay hands with prayer on all the clergy of his own diocese and receive them into the full ministry of the united Church. The form of prayer drawn up expressly denies that any gift, grace or authority previously given to any minister is being given again, thus ruling out what is commonly called re-ordination, and seeks only to bestow whatever is included in the full Ministry of the United Church, which has not been previously bestowed in the minister's original ordination. This Method would seem to be wholly appropriate to doing what is desired to be done, namely the setting up of a ministry where each man is possessed of the same character and authority as all others, so that all ministers are equally accredited in the eyes of all members of the Church.

Baptism

The Baptist Churches are among the negotiating bodies in Ceylon. All have agreed as to the essential meaning of Baptism, but practice has been divergent, all except Baptists practising Infant Baptism, while the Baptists allow only the Baptism of those who can make a conscious and meaningful confession of sin and response of faith to the grace of God in the Sacrament. A very careful draft (pp 12, 13, 14) has been made to which the delegates of all the churches have agreed, wherein is first given an agreed doctrinal statement on the meaning of Baptism and then provision for both Infant and Adult Baptism. These two practices are mutually exclusive. The Baptists have conceded that Infant Baptism is true Baptism into the repenting and believing life of the Church; and the others have conceded that where parents of children wish to defer Baptism so that personal faith and penitence can be evidenced, they may do so, provided that the child is brought to a service of dedication which shall entitle him to some status within the Church, rather similar to that of a catechumen. The admission of a however baptised, to communicant status, by confirmation by a Bishop, in which he will receive power by the gift of the Holy Spirit. This charitable conflation of divergent traditions gives assurance that full recognition is given to the fact that there can be but one baptism in the life of each Christian and that full membership of the Church is accorded only to those who have made personal profession of penitence and belief at the time of their confirmation baptism. In other words, Baptism and Confirmation together constitute full Christian initiation, whether they be joined in one service or separated by many years.

The Outline of the Scheme

The Scheme is divided into five main sections: The first is formal, the Name and Title of the United Church, with a brief statement of why it exists. Section 2 is entitled 'Faith and Order'. It consists of agreements on matters of fundamental doctrine which must be the basis of a union between churches. It will remain a permanent record of the basis on which the Union was achieved. It is not a complete summary of Theology because much theology is admittedly common to all the church

emphasis has chiefly been laid on elements which have received differing interpretations in various churches. It also contains comprehensive agreements on other important elements in Christian life, such as Worship, Marriage and the Unification of the Ministries.

The third section is called 'Administration and Discipline'. It gives the basis for a Constitution of the Church, being chiefly concerned with its organisation as a whole, in dioceses and pastorates (parishes) together with a detailed description of the privileges and obligations of the orders of the threefold Sacred Ministry. The first sub-section sets out who will be members of the United Church. The question of whether there are members of any uniting Church who do not wish to be members of the United Church has not been dealt with as it has been rightly decided that this is a domestic question for each uniting Church before any act of union takes place. No attempt is made to override individual consciences: the conditions of membership (p32) simply state who are eligible for membership when a union is achieved.

It is the responsibility of the United Church to frame a complete constitution for itself once it exists. This section 3 contains just enough to lay down the general principles which such a constitution must embody. Two other important matters are therefore dealt with, a brief statement of the opportunities to be afforded to a lay ministry (p 44) and rather fuller regulations concerning Marriage in the United Church. The various offices described on pp 44 and 45 are somewhat overlapping and will have to be thought out more carefully after Union. But the nature of the work which is open to lay persons is fully described and will be provided for.

There has been a careful attempt in this section to construct a real fusion of episcopal, presbyteral and congregational duties and responsibilities into a workable whole. There will be a real responsibility for Bishops, Presbyters and Laymen in the pastorates, dioceses and synod of the Church. In accepting Episcopacy "in a constitutional form" this naturally follows. It is the whole body of believers who take the responsibility for constitutional government of the Church and who share in guarding and

formulating doctrine and liturgy. This is a fundamental conception underlying the whole scheme.

One other matter must also be regarded as integral to the whole character of the United Church. This is the intention that it shall be on terms of "communion and fellowship" with the parent churches (p 29). It has to be recognised that this will involve agreements being reached between the United Church and each separate parent Church, and it is the intention that each parent church shall be asked on what terms and how closely these relations can be framed. This relationship will be extended impartially to parent churches, episcopal and non-episcopal. No uniting church shall be deprived of the relations of communion and fellowship it has not with its parent church, by the action of the United Church. Any refusal will be the decision of the parent Church.

Section 4 contains the procedure for the actual inauguration and setting up of the United Church. It is purely administrative and procedural and depends on the agreement of the Churches to the previous three sections. Part 5 is the Ordinal of the Church, only slightly different from the existing Anglican ordinal. It has been felt wise to include this as it makes unmistakably plain the intention of the United Church in ordaining its ministry and how the rites will be performed. The judgement of other churches on the validity and regularity of the Sacred Ministry can be made at the outset and this will go far in helping them to define their relations with the United Church.

This analysis of the Scheme has been given as factually as possible. No attempt has been made to evaluate the proposals. The judgement on them is to be given separately by each Church concerned in the light of its own understanding of the nature of Christian doctrine and of the Church. The Negotiating Committee has finished its task by producing a document which is now before the churches for their consideration and vote. What is now needed is a period of unhurried critical study throughout each Church and prayer to the Holy Spirit for a right judgement on the proposals. If this is done it will appear in due time whether or not the thing is from God, or whether He wills His Church ultimately to be one in some other way.

Dioceses in the United Church : Large or Small ?

Proposals for West Bengal

DISCUSSION on the pattern of administrative boundaries for the Church after Union has been hampered by an undue preoccupation with the thought of a "Diocese" as something heavy and burdensome to carry. In consequence, proposals have tended to suggest that such units should be as few as possible and there has been considerable concern as to how much they will cost.

The Negotiating Committee was not satisfied with this approach to the question. After all, the Church does not plan to have dioceses and bishops for the sake of having a burden to carry, but for the best functioning of the Church. It is a means of advance, not a load to be carried. For this reason, it has asked for regional conferences in which the people most directly concerned may think out together the most efficient plan that they can prepare for the vigorous and healthy life of the Church after Union. It is they who are best able to see whether it will be better to have a small number of big and strong dioceses, with the danger of remoteness from local Church life, or a larger number of smaller dioceses with the advantages of nearness to everyday matters.

We give below the main recommendations of a Conference of this nature for West Bengal, at which all five negotiating Churches, which exist in that area, were represented :

I. The General Pattern when the Union comes :

It is recommended :

1. That dioceses should be of such a size as to allow the Bishop to be an effective Pastor to his people ;

2. That, while the language of any area should be taken into account in determining boundaries, dioceses should be geographical units ;

3. That, in following the above principles there be four dioceses in West Bengal, comprising the following areas :—

- (i) Calcutta City, with Hooghly and Howrah Districts ;
- (ii) 24 Parganas, Nadia, Murshidabad, and Malda ;

(iii) Northern Area, i. e. Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri—Cooch Behar ;

(iv) Burdwan Division (Midnapore, Bankura, Burdwan & Birbhum)

4. That as the work in West Dinajpur is mainly among Santalis, this district be linked with the Diocese of Bhagalpur in Bihar, but, if this be impracticable, it be linked with the diocese of Burdwan Division.

II. Planning for Union on the Local Level :

Taking into consideration the fact that in some places, including single villages, two or more of the negotiating churches are working today, the Conference considered what needed to be done even now to prepare the congregations for the changes which union might bring and to spread understanding of the issues involved. It was reported that a conference had been already organised in the 24 Parganas district. The following recommendations were therefore made :

1. That Conferences, similar to that of the Comity Committee in 24 Parganas, be held wherever more than one of the negotiating churches are working in close proximity, to discuss means of co-operation in Christian work ;

2. That churches be asked to arrange for information on Church Union to be disseminated in the local churches ;

3. That Churches be asked to organize united services and to arrange meetings for interchange of others' points of view ;

4. That further attempts be made for co-operation in evangelistic and other Christian enterprise.

III. Financial Support for Dioceses :

On this matter, the Conference contented itself with the following Note :

"Discussion of the financial support of dioceses was not taken up. But it has been pointed out that the two present Anglican dioceses are already in working order in Calcutta and Barrackpore (Nadia, 24 Parganas etc.). The Northern Diocese will be mainly ex-UCNI, which has already its own super-

isitory organisation ; and the Burdwan Division will be mainly a blending of the two Methodist bodies, who already have their Chairman of Conference and other organisation".

West Bengal has thus formulated some

clear and practical proposals which do not ignore the financial side of things but which do not allow themselves to be determined solely by that aspect.

Other areas, please copy !!

Economic Assets of the Church After Union

AN important report has been prepared for the negotiating churches by a Committee which was asked to study the best means by which the movable and immovable properties of the Church could be safeguarded and utilised after Union. This Report contains advice which ought to be acted upon without delay by the various churches, and mentions various things which only they can carry out and which therefore must be done before union. We note some of the salient features of the report :

1. Trust Association : While the Church itself, as a spiritual body, cannot be registered it is imperative that it should set up and register a proper Trust Association empowered to hold all the properties of the United Church. The Committee does not favour the continuance of separate or regional Associations and would like existing Associations to transfer their properties to this single body as soon as it is functioning.

2. Transfer of Property : Quite apart from Church Union, it is underlined that overseas property-holding bodies should lose no time in transferring their properties to Indian (or Pakistani) authorities. This requires action first of all in the original country to make sure the way is open for such a transfer and then acts of transference to the appropriate bodies in India or Pakistan. Attention is called to the distinction under Indian law between a "charitable trust" and a "religious Trust" which in some other countries are not distinguished.

3. Correct Procedure : The Committee urgently calls attention to the following point as affecting not only property but the whole matter of the continuity of the Church : "It is essential for each of the uniting churches to be meticulously careful over the observance of its own Rules and Regulations with regard to any decision to enter a United Church".

4. Methods of Transfer of Property : The committee expresses confidence that once it is clear that an overseas body has the legal power to transfer its property and has taken all the necessary steps to do so, a competent lawyer will be able to guide those responsible on the steps to be taken. At the same time they are insistent that it will be a mere waste of time to ask for legal help in India at all, until the earlier steps have been taken, and that when the help of the lawyer is engaged the instructions to him should be absolutely explicit.

5. Economic Assets Available : The final advice of the committee is as follows : "As soon as possible, each of the uniting churches should make a list of its assets, indicating their approximate values and stating whether properties held by existing Trust Associations and Missionary bodies could legally be transferred to a Trust Associations representing a United Church.

"It is also desirable that information should be given about those churches' finances : how much money is being spent on each side of the work of the Church ; how much is raised in India ; and how much comes from related churches overseas."

Bishop Palmer of Bombay

Edwin James Palmer, Seventh Bishop of Bombay, by P. R. Brinton (Kenyon Press. 3 shillings and six pence.)

A review of this book in the English *Church Quarterly Review* describes it as "a belated and as none will know better than its author, a most inadequate tribute." But no doubt Indian churchmen will be glad to know of the book and to procure it, as it describes a great figure in the life of the Church of this Province. Bishop Palmer went from England to be Bishop of Bombay in 1908. The diocesan clergy in those days included no less than 60 European priests, most of them Government chaplains. The other clergy had been trained in a wide variety of traditions, C.M.S., S.P.G., and the Cowley Fathers: one of Bishop Palmer's tasks was to heal various bitter divisions which had sprung up before his time due to difference of churchmanship. He succeeded so well that when he resigned twenty years later he left behind him a united diocese. He was also opposed to the continuance of an ecclesiastical establishment in India, and from early days he worked to free the Indian Church from England. He began drafting a new constitution and was a leader in the setting up of diocesan and provincial councils. In addition he was a leader in the movement which led to the inauguration of the C.S.I. The principles which guided him are set out in his book *When the Great Church Awakes*. In discussion his slogan was "We must get this right". He was never in a hurry and his intellectual integrity never allowed him to think that to hide differences was to solve them. He was absolutely certain that it was the will of Christ that his Church should be visibly one and he was sure that if men would seek first to do the will of their common Master, through His Holy Spirit, He would lead them at least to a common heart and mind. It was he of course, too, who encouraged the foundation of the *Christa Seva Sangha* and the compiling of the *Liturgy for India*.

Reprinted from the *Calcutta Diocesan Magazine*.

UNITY AND THE CHURCH'S WITNESS

We cannot think of the witness of the Church without admitting that in every land and in every department of that witness the church is hindered and weakened beyond words to describe by its unhappy divisions. Most Christians would agree with William Temple that this is the crying scandal of the age. Sometimes I tremble at my effrontery when I am pleading for peace and unity among the nations and realize that after nearly two thousand years of Christianity the very members incorporate in the Body of Christ cannot demonstrate their oneness in Him by uniting in the Holy Rite which He instituted and commanded them to continue. We are all involved in this. No denomination should waste time comforting itself by saying, "Our attitude is more Christlike. If all would do as we do, all would be well." We are all involved in the sins of pride and prejudice and our confession and repentance should be public and complete. Confession and repentance are surely the words to use, for every hour that passes with the prayer of our Lord unfulfilled through the hardness and stubbornness of men's hearts and minds, the church continues in sin. There can be no forgiveness without confession and repentance.

Right Revd. R. F. V. Scott, Moderator of the General Assembly, Church of Scotland, addressing the General Assembly, May 1956.

News Item**General Council of the Church of India, Pakistan,
Burma and Ceylon.****Decisions on the Plan of Union, January 1956**

Decision 29: That this Council instructs its delegates to the Negotiating Committee to continue their endeavour to secure such clarification and amendment of the formulas and procedure for the unification of the ministry and episcopate as may secure the full recognition of the ministry by the Anglican Communion.

Decision 30: That this Council instructs its delegates to the Negotiating Committee to seek some amendment in the references to Confirmation on the following lines:—

It is important legally as well as spiritually that the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon, as well as the other negotiating Churches, shall be in a position to claim that in entering the United Church, it is not surrendering anything of fundamental importance in its tradition of Faith and Orders. In the Anglican Communion, Confirmation by a Bishop has been treasured as a part of its inheritance, and the following amendments are suggested with a view to ensuring its continuance within the United Church. The present wording, it has been felt, might be interpreted as implying that it is immaterial whether the rite of Confirmation is administered by a Bishop or by a Presbyter. The proposed amendment, while guarding against such an interpretation, will not, of course, exclude the use of other forms of service for admission to full communicant status, whether conducted by a Presbyter.

- (i) In Section VI (A) (vii) of the Basis (p 4) the first sentence should read:—
“The form of admission shall be through Confirmation by a Bishop, or through some other service conducted by a Bishop or a Presbyter”.
- (ii) Similar verbal changes should be made in the Constitution, Part II Section III (p 21), as amended in 1955, in (i) line 8, in (ii) A 4, line 2, and in (iv).

Two Unions in 1956

1. The Church of Scotland and the United Original Secession Church

A historic moment in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May 1956 was the reception back into the fellowship of that Church of the representatives of the Synod of the “Secession” Church of that country. Representing a division which took place as long ago as 1733, when four ministers were expelled after they had made a protest against “patronage” in the appointing of ministers, this group had remained aloof from several unions of churches which during the last century have contributed to the rebuilding of the Church of Scotland. Their welcome back after these two centuries and more was whole-hearted and unanimous.

The United Original Secession Church has for long carried on Mission work in India in and around Seoni in Madhya Pradesh. This work is now linked with the work of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland, and there is therefore a possibility of it being related to the United Church of Northern India.

2. Admission of the Moravian Church in Ladakh to the United Church of Northern India :

At the meeting held in 1953 the General Assembly of the United Church of Northern India received an unexpected visitor. This was one of the Elders of the Moravian Church in Ladakh who had come to ask that his Church might be received into the wider fellowship represented by the U. C. N. I. His journey from Ladakh had taken him over two weeks, and the correspondence on the terms of union which followed could not but be slow. Power had been given to the Executive Assembly, however, to receive this historic group and in April 1956 the final decision was taken which has admitted the "Moravian" Church Council as an integral part of the Synod of the Punjab of the United Church of Northern India.

Why Not ?

Why we cannot " leave these questions to work themselves out ".

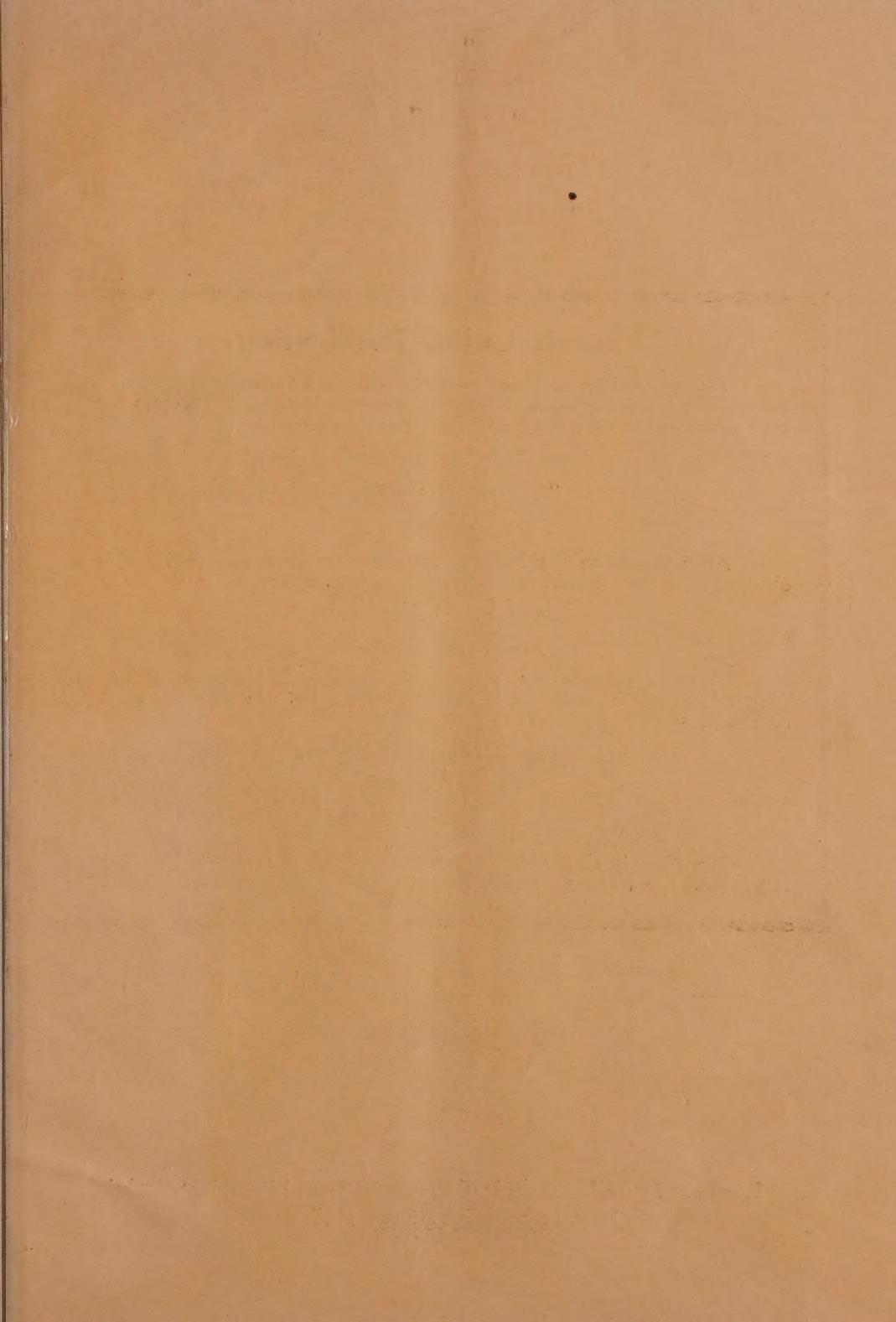
1. The purpose of God for man is to be one family of which he is the Father. The mission of Christ is to all mankind without exception. Every kind of "bar" be it of race, colour, nationality or religion, is contrary to His will. "Bars" in religion present a special difficulty in that questions of what is true are involved. Yet many of our religious differences are meant not to be "bars" but complementary enrichments in a total pattern of human life to the Glory of God.

2. God has sent His Son to bring back mankind separated from Himself and each other by sin. Atonement has been wrought for us, and one by one men are to share His life and be thus united to God and to each other. Thus He builds His Church.

3. The Church is thus the beginning of His purpose for mankind, for all men. Our Gospel is that we have found the key to unity. We proclaim to the nations that only by returning to Christ can they find peace and unity and real life. To each individual we say "come and give your life to Christ". Every confirmation candidate is assured of the gift of the Holy Spirit, whose indwelling unites him with God and all fellow-Christians. But the message is immeasurably weakened by the obvious fact of Christian disunity. The world says "Physician, heal thyself".

Right Revd. K.H.C. Warner, Bishop of the Diocese of Edinburgh, Episcopal Church in Scotland ;
reprinted from *Life and Work*.





Church Union Publications

The Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan (2nd Edition) is published by the Christian Literature Society, Madras but copies are at present to be obtained (Price Re 1/- each, postage extra) from :

North India Tract and Book Society,
18 Clive Road,
Allahabad.

Amendments to the Plan as approved up to August 1955, may be obtained from the Secretary of the Negotiating Committee,

Very Rev. A. Ralla Ram, D. D.
Jamna, Allahabad.

Suggested Services for use at the proposed Inauguration of the Church of North India and Pakistan (price Re. 1/- plus postage) are obtainable from the publishers :

Christian Literature Society,
Post Box 501,
Park Town, Madras.

The Plan is also obtainable in several of the major languages of North India and Pakistan. For information apply to the Secretary.